



From the Board Room

ACTIVITIES OF THE NC BOARD OF EDUCATION

APRIL 2014

The State Board of Education is comprised of the State Treasurer, the Lieutenant Governor and 11 citizens appointed by the Governor. This newsletter highlights the Board's activities on behalf of the 1.5 million public school children in our state and the more than 100,000 educators who provide services to children. View all State Board of Education member and advisor information online at <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/AboutUs/AboutUs.aspx?S=10399&TID=1>.

To access current and archived versions of *From the Boardroom*, visit <http://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/> and select the "SBE Newsletter" tab.

SBE ADOPTS STRATEGIC PLAN

Board members this month officially adopted the State Board of Education Strategic Plan to guide the work of the Board and the Department of Public Instruction in the years to come. Work on the plan began during the Board's planning session held last October. In the months that followed and during the Board's two days of planning meetings that preceded the Board meeting this month, the document was modified, updated and fine-tuned to reflect feedback from school superintendents and other education stakeholders across the state. In the adoption of the plan, Chairman Cobey called the document a good first step and asked the Department to develop an implementation plan aligned with the Board's strategic plan. NCDPI staff are to present this plan to Board members at its June meeting. The SBE's Strategic Plan features the Board's vision and mission, as well as goals and measurable objectives that are organized in the categories of globally competitive students; personalized education; excellent educators; financial, business, and technology systems; and healthy, safe and responsible students. A condensed version as well as the full version of the SBE's Strategic Plan will soon be available at <http://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/> under the "Strategic Plan" tab.

VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS STUDY REPORT APPROVED

Board members accepted the *Virtual Charter School Study Report* to the NC General Assembly this month. The report included the following recommendations:

- The Legislature should make statutory changes to clarify that the SBE **does** have the authority to authorize credit-bearing virtual charter schools.
- Statutory changes should not mandate that the SBE create virtual charters, but should allow for creation of a pilot program before any virtual charter is awarded, if the SBE exercises this authority.
- The SBE should be authorized to issue an RFP for virtual charter school pilot participants. Through the RFP process, each applicant for a pilot shall propose a funding amount based on its individual education, business, and governance plan. From this information, the SBE will determine a funding amount and report to the General Assembly for statutory changes.
- Via the pilot program, the SBE will manage and monitor the progress of included schools and collect data. Observations will indicate if requirements placed on these pilot schools will foster successful education outcomes in North Carolina.

NEW DATA SHOW POSITIVE TRENDS FOR SCHOOL CLIMATE

Dropouts, school crime and violence, short- and long-term suspensions and the use of corporal punishment all continued to decrease in the 2012-13 school year, according to the *2012-13 Consolidated Data Report* presented to State Board of Education members in April. The high school dropout rate reached another record low. The total number of acts of school crime and violence also was the lowest reported since 2008-09, although the number of students in North Carolina public schools in 2012-13 was at an all-time high – 1,492,793.

KEY REPORT FINDINGS:

Dropout Rate – Last school year, 2.45 percent of high school students dropped out of school, which was an 18.6 percent decrease from the previous year's record low of 3.01 percent. A total of 11,049 high school students dropped out in 2012-13 as compared to 13,488 in 2011-12 (18.1 percent decrease). The number of high school students dropping out decreased at all grade levels and for all ethnic groups. Both the number of high school dropouts and the high school dropout rate have been cut in half over the last five years.

School Crime and Violence – Seventy-seven percent of all North Carolina public schools reported five or fewer acts of crime last year, and dangerous or violent offenses account for 3 percent of all offenses. Reported acts decreased by 4.8 percent to 10,630 from 11,161 acts in 2011-12. Most frequently reported acts involved illegal possession of controlled substances, weapons (excluding firearms or powerful explosives) or alcoholic beverages, and assault on school personnel. These four acts accounted for 95.5 percent or 10,155 of the total number of reported acts.

Suspensions and Expulsions – Short-term suspensions (10 days or fewer) among students in all grades decreased by 4 percent in 2012-13. There were 247,919 short-term suspensions reported as opposed to the 258,197 reported in 2011-12. The decline in long-term suspensions (11 days or more) among students in all grades continued in 2012-13 with 1,423 reported. This is an 11.6 percent decrease from the 1,609 reported in 2011-12.

Corporal Punishment – Corporal punishment is a local school board policy decision, but use of it declined by nearly 50 percent in 2012-13. Districts reported 203 uses, a 49.8 percent decrease from the 404 reported in 2011-12.

The full report is available online at www.ncpublicschools.org/research/discipline/reports/.